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HOW 4-H CLUBS DEVELOP LEADERSHIP ABILITY

A radio talk by Lucille Turner, State 4-H Club Leader, Athens, Ga. delivered in the National 4-H club radio program, and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC radio stations, December 1, 1934.

--ooOoo--

I have been requested to talk with you a few minutes on "How 4-H Clubs Develop Leadership Ability".

Let's think first of just what we mean when we say a person is a leader. I should say that he or she is a person who has love and kindness for individuals and one who is earnest in his or her efforts. Then I'd say a leader is a person of amiable disposition, who is dependable, sympathetic and honest, who has the determination that is needed to see a job finished and who can inspire others to put forth their best efforts.

With all of these qualifications for a leader before us let us think "how 4-H clubs can develop leadership ability". May I name three ways:

First - Through the individual club member;

Second - Through the Community organization;

Third - Through the county organization.

The 4-H Club opens a doorway of "opportunity" to boys and girls to develop into strong leaders. There is an opportunity for every individual member in every rural community, in every village, and in every town where there is an organized 4-H club.

From an individual standpoint, the 4-H Club gives the boy or girl the opportunity of making real his or her dreams; the opportunity to specialize in one field; the opportunity of selection and ownership; the opportunity of creating new ideas and participation in all activities. All of these means of self-expression develop the Leadership ability of the club member.

I once knew a girl who was very timid and who almost had an inferiority complex. Through club work she became interested in a home improvement project--that of improving her own bedroom. When the project was finished, she was so eager to show and tell others she forgot her inferiority complex and was visiting her neighbors showing them how they could make improvements. 'Twas through her 4-H Club work that she received the practical training and experience necessary to lead others.

Now from the standpoint of the community club organization. The programs for community meetings are so planned as to give time for a business meeting which is conducted according to parliamentary rules. There is time for an educational program where individuals may tell the entire group of their experiences with various projects. There is time for recreation where the entire group learns to play together. Such a program provides opportunity for developing leadership ability.

From the standpoint of the county organization or the 4-H Club Council, there is an opportunity for community leaders to come together and make plans for the entire membership of the county. At these seasonal meetings, plans are made and instructions are given for carrying them out in every section of the county.

(over)

Now I should like to tell you a story of a club member that will illustrate just what I have tried to say to you. I know of a boy who had never seemed interested in anything. Finally he joined a 4-H Club and raised a pig as his project. At the end of the year his pig was the best pig in the community and county. When he was given a part on the program at a club meeting to tell how he raised his pig he was eager to tell his story. He was so full of enthusiasm and so earnest in his efforts that he inspired others to joint a pig club. In due time he was made project leader for pig club work in his community. This opportunity of self-expression gave self-confidence and opened the doorway of other opportunities. Now this young man is club president and leader of all club activities in his community. This office gives him the privilege of being a member of the County Club Council.

There are other evidences of the fact that 4-H Club Work developes leadership ability. Just this past summer when so many trained people were in demand to fill positions necessary for administration of emergency programs, one of the questions asked many of the applicants in Georgia was, "Did you complete your work as a 4-H Club member?" A state official said, "We have found that former 4-H Club members are dependable persons and have the practical experience and training needed in the administration of the various programs".

Should I summarize what I have tried to say to you, I would say that 4-H Clubs develop leadership ability through the practical training and the practical experience of the individual; through planning programs for small groups or clubs; and through experiences in outlining 4-H Club plans for an entire county.